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Letter dated 5 April 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 1 April 1999, addressed to you by Aytuğ Plûmer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Volkan VURAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Letter dated 1 April 1999 from Mr. Aytuğ Plümer addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 12 March 1999 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative at the United Nations (A/53/863-S/1999/282), which contains allegations distorting the nature of the Cyprus question.

The Greek Cypriot side persistently seeks to create artificial issues such as "settlers" or "refugees" so as to divert attention from the crux of the Cyprus question, namely, the illegal claim of the Greek Cypriot administration to be the "government of Cyprus". Ever since the Greek Cypriot side's forceful usurpation of the legitimate seat of government in 1963, the Greek Cypriot administration has been violating the Turkish Cypriot people's vested rights of sovereign equality, partnership and fundamental freedoms through a campaign of ethnic cleansing during 1963-1974 and thereafter maintaining an inhuman embargo in all fields.

On the question of the so-called "settlers", it should be pointed out that it is the Greek Cypriot side which, together with Greece, has always attempted to alter the demographic character of Cyprus, not only by introducing thousands of settlers from Greece but also, as mentioned hereinabove, by trying to "cleanse" Cyprus of its ethnic Turkish population. It is noteworthy in this context that Mr. Andreas Papandreou, a former Prime Minister of Greece, has recorded in his memoir, Democracy at Gunpoint, that during 1964 alone as many as 20,000 troops and officers from Greece illegally entered the island to take part in the attempt to materialize the annexation of the island to Greece (enosis).

Ample evidence also exists in the United Nations Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council (e.g., documents S/5950 of September 1964 and S/8286 of December 1967) pertaining to the illegal importation of Greek mainland troops into Cyprus and their being given "legal status" in order to resettle them on the island on a permanent basis.

At present the Greek Cypriot administration continues to admit tens of thousands of people from other countries, and, as a result of the laxity of its immigration policies, South Cyprus has become, as widely reported in the international press, a centre for money-laundering, drugs, arms smuggling and other illicit activity.

As regards the question of displaced persons, it should be mentioned that nearly four fifths of the Turkish Cypriot population have been rendered refugees or have become displaced persons since 1963, some of them several times over, as a result of the Greek Cypriot side's attempts to annex Cyprus to Greece. It should be recalled that the issue of displaced persons was fundamentally settled between the two sides through the 1975 Voluntary Exchange of Population Agreement which was implemented under the supervision of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in September 1975, paving the way for an overall settlement of the Cyprus issue on a bi-zonal basis (see the relevant

United Nations documents S/11789 of 5 August 1975 and S/11789/Add.1 of 10 September 1975).

A natural consequence of the population exchange agreement has been the establishment of parameters within which reciprocal property claims by both sides can be settled, as was foreseen in the United Nations process in the context of the mission of good offices, through property exchange and/or compensation. The Turkish Cypriot side has consistently maintained that the settlement of reciprocal property claims is essential for reconciliation between the two sides in Cyprus and a comprehensive settlement. If the Greek Cypriot side sincerely seeks to address this issue it should reciprocate to the proposal made by President Denktaş for the establishment of a Joint Property Claims Commission which would facilitate the resolution of property issues.

It is high time that third parties interested in a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus dispute impress upon the Greek Cypriot side the need to desist from its campaign of propaganda and defamation against the TRNC and Turkey, if ever there is to be reconciliation between the two sides in the island. A comprehensive settlement of the dispute can be facilitated through the acknowledgement of the prevailing reality on the island, namely, the existence of two sovereign States, and working towards a settlement based on partnership as envisaged in our proposal of 31 August 1998.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Aytuğ PLÜMER
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus